

## Claims

What is claimed is:

1. A manufacturing apparatus for manufacturing an intermediate product via process modules for performing a plurality of processes, the apparatus comprising:

an inter-process carrying means for carrying a container between the process modules, the container being capable of storing a plurality of intermediate products therein;

an intra-process carrying means for removing the intermediate products from the container and carrying the intermediate products within each process module in a single product state; and

a plurality of processing means for performing the plurality of processes, respectively, within each process module,

wherein the plurality of processing means are arranged substantially in a carrying direction of the intermediate products in accordance with an order of processes to be performed on the intermediate products, without arranging a plurality of processing means for performing the same kinds of processes on the intermediate products in a group.

2. The manufacturing apparatus according to Claim 1, further comprising transfer means provided between the inter-process carrying means and the intra-process carrying means and having a buffering function of temporarily storing the intermediate products to be transferred therein.

3. The manufacturing apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the

inter-process carrying means is adapted to carry a container before the maximum number of intermediate products capable of being stored in the container is reached, and the intra-process carrying means selects the plurality of intermediate products to be processed in the same next process module, stores the selected intermediate products in the container in a group, and transfers the container to the inter-process carrying means.

4. The manufacturing apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the intermediate products comprise plate-shaped members.

5. The manufacturing apparatus according to Claim 4, wherein the intermediate products comprise semiconductor wafers.

6. The manufacturing apparatus according to Claim 4, wherein the intermediate products comprise substrates for liquid crystal display devices.

7. A manufacturing method of manufacturing an intermediate product via process modules for performing a plurality of processes, the method comprising:

an inter-process carrying step of carrying a container between the process modules, the container being capable of storing a plurality of intermediate products therein;

an intra-process carrying step of removing the intermediate products from the container and carrying the intermediate products within each process module in a single product state; and

a processing step of performing the plurality of processes by a plurality of processing means, respectively, in each process module,

wherein the plurality of processing means are arranged substantially in a carrying direction of the intermediate products in accordance with an order of processes to be performed on the intermediate products, without arranging the plurality of processing means for performing the same kinds of processes on the intermediate products in a group.

8. A manufacturing apparatus for manufacturing an intermediate product via process modules for performing a plurality of processes, the apparatus comprising:

an inter-process carrying means adapted to carry a container between the process modules, the container being capable of storing a plurality of intermediate products therein;

an intra-process carrying means adapted to remove the intermediate products from the container and carrying the intermediate products within each process module in a single product state; and

a plurality of processing means adapted to perform the plurality of processes, respectively, within each process module,

wherein the plurality of processing means are arranged substantially in a carrying direction of the intermediate products in accordance with an order of processes to be performed on the intermediate products, a plurality of processors performing the same kinds of processes on the intermediate products being ungrouped.